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Montserrat

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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I. General

1. Montserrat[1] is situated in the Leeward Islands in the eastern Caribbean, 43 kilometres south-west of Antigua and 64 kilometres north-west of the French Overseas Department of Guadeloupe. The island covers an area of 103 square kilometres, all of which is volcanic and mountainous. Its coastline is rugged and there is no all-weather harbour.[2]

2. Montserrat was named after a Spanish monastery by Christopher Columbus on his second trip to the island in 1493. In 1632, the island became a British colony, and its first settlers came mainly from Ireland. Slaves, who worked the cotton, sugar and tobacco plantations, were unsuccessful in an uprising in 1768. Although Montserrat was occupied by France for brief periods of time, it returned definitively to British rule in 1783. Montserrat became a British Crown Colony in 1871.

3. In July 1995, the Montsoufriere volcano, dormant for more than 400 years, erupted and caused the evacuation of population from the southern part of the island to its northern "safe" areas. Montserrat's capital, Plymouth, was abandoned after the increase in volcanic activity in 1996. The temporary capital is now located in Brades and a new capital is being planned in Little Bay, which is situated on the north-east coast of the island.

4. The population of Montserrat was 10,581 in 1995. By 1998, it was reduced to 3,500. In 1999, the population was estimated to be 4,600, and in 2002 approximately 4,300.

II. Constitutional, political and legal issues

5. Montserrat is a Non-Self-Governing Territory of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Montserrat Constitution Order came into force in 1990. It provides for a Governor appointed by the Queen; an Executive Council comprising the Governor as President, the Chief Minister, three ministers and two ex officio members (the Attorney General and the Financial Secretary); and a Legislative Council, comprising a Speaker, two ex officio members (the Attorney General and the Financial Secretary), seven elected members returned from single-member constituencies on the basis of universal adult suffrage and two nominated members. Elections are held every five years on the basis of universal adult suffrage. Since the eruption of the Montsoufriere volcano, the entire island has been considered to be one electoral constituency. Nine at-large members are elected in two rounds of voting. The new Assembly does not include any nominated members. The next election is due to be held in early 2006.

6. As was reported in last year's working paper (A/AC.109/2003/2, para. 9), the new electoral system has established a qualifying pre-poll residence period of 36 months which caused some displeasure among the Montserratians living and working abroad.

7. Ministerial responsibilities cover all areas of government business, including finance. While the Governor retains responsibilities for external affairs, internal security, defence, the pubic service and offshore financial services, he is expected to act on the advice of the Ministers.

8. The current Governor of Montserrat, Tony Longrigg, has been in office since May 2001. The Chief Minister, John Osborne, took office in April 2001. The main political parties are the New People's Liberation Movement (NPLM) and the National Progressive Party (NPP).

9. In July 2003, the new Governor of Montserrat was approved by the United Kingdom to take office in April 2004 following the retirement of the present Governor from the British Diplomatic Service. Mrs. Deborah Barnes-Jones will be the first female Governor of a British Overseas Territory.[3]

10. As was reported in last year's working paper (A/AC.109/2003/2, para. 5), in 2002 a Constitutional Review Committee was appointed to review the Constitution. In March 2003, the Constitutional Review Commissioners released a report, which recommended, among other changes in the current Constitution, that the Chief Minister of the Territory be invited to examine short-listed candidates for the position of Governor and make a reasoned recommendation, thus participating in the selection process. The report recorded a minority view that the Chief Minister could not do that effectively since he did not know the candidates. Nevertheless, the report concluded that the proposed change from the imposition of the candidate by the United Kingdom to cooperative action in choosing a Governor would have a symbolic significance. In addition, the report registered the opinion that a candidate for Governor should have stipulated qualities and capabilities, namely that such a person should have some understanding of Caribbean and Montserrat culture, as well as have some skills in the area of development planning.[4]

11. According to information provided by the administering Power, during the discussion of the constitutional review process in the Territories and the role of Governors at the Overseas Territories Council meeting in December 2003, in response to the intention by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to arrange talks with Governors and the Opposition in London on the proposed changes in the Constitutions of all Territories, the Chief Minister of Montserrat remarked that in Montserrat constitutional change was not a party political matter. He said that he had established a bipartisan Committee under the chairmanship of the leader of the Opposition to consider Montserrat's Constitutional report.

12. The report of the Constitutional Review Commission also suggested that Montserrat and the United Kingdom should develop some arrangement that would allow the Territory to trade in international markets without the approval of the United Kingdom. The dependent status of Montserrat should not impede its ability to engage in such trade, and provision to allow it should be included in the Constitution.

13. In addition, the report stated that the dependent status of Montserrat should not prevent it from benefiting from certain international arrangements and conventions, since the Territory is part of the global community. For example, under the Kyoto Protocol on climate change (1997), industrialized countries which cannot meet established targets for reducing the greenhouse effect might buy emission credits or invest in energy conservation using the Kyoto mechanism. While independent Caribbean countries, signatories to the Protocol, can sell their "extra" credits to the developed countries, Montserrat is excluded from this process. At the same time, the United Kingdom is expected to fund such emission credits from corporate taxes.[5]

14. The law of the Territory is English common law together with locally enacted legislation. It is administered by the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. The Royal Montserrat Police Force is funded by the technical cooperation programme.

15. During his October 2003 visit to London, the Chief Minister of the Territory asked the United Kingdom for permission to join the other members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in establishing a regional Appellate Court and a Single Market and Economy (see also para. 49 below). Currently, Montserrat is the only member of that regional organization that has not signed the relevant protocols. CARICOM plans to establish a single market by 2005 when member countries are to lift trade barriers under the Free Trade Area of the Americas. The Caribbean Court of Justice is considered to be essential for resolving regional trade disputes. It is supposed to begin working in 2004 and would replace the London-based Privy Council as the highest appeals court for many English speaking Caribbean countries. According to the Governor of the Territory, the United Kingdom has no intention of holding the integration process in the Caribbean. At the same time, there are still some legal issues to be resolved between Montserrat and the United Kingdom before the Territory can become fully subject to the Caribbean Court. This discussion takes place against the background of the British Government urging Montserrat to become more self-sufficient as the United Kingdom reduces its yearly subsidies to the Territory.[6]

III. Status of the Montsoufriere volcano

16. The Montserrat Volcano Observatory was established after the eruption of the Montsoufriere volcano in 1995 and became a statutory body of the Government of Montserrat in 1999. Funded mainly through the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), its role is to advise civilian authorities on the volcanic activity and associated hazards. Contrary to the initial prognosis, the volcanic eruptions were repeated in 2000, 2002 and 2003.

17. On 12 July 2003, the Soufriere Hills volcano erupted again. A series of volcanic explosions took place on 12 and 13 July, which sent ash up to 40,000 feet in the air. Part of the volcano's dome collapsed and the roads were covered with two inches of mud. The dome collapse also caused major ash fallout of up to 6 inches. This eruption forced the closure of airports in the neighbouring countries. Large airlines, including Continental Airlines, American Airlines, Air France and US Airways, had to cancel flights into nearby St. Martin. Several flights were stranded and had to be diverted to the British Virgin Islands, the United States Virgin Islands and to Puerto Rico.[7]

18. The volcanic ash from the latest eruption, the largest since 1995, carried by strong winds covered the neighbouring islands of Saint Kitts and Nevis, Antigua, Dutch and French St. Martin, St. Barths, Anguilla and the British and United States Virgin Islands.[8]

19. Although the roofs of several business facilities collapsed under the weight of the ash accompanied by rain showers, there were no major injuries or loss of life. However, the eruption caused temporary disruption of electricity and water supplies. The damage to the water sector was estimated at over half a million dollars due to loss of some vital equipment. According to the Manager of the Water Authority, the water supply reached a critical level after the eruption, and it was necessary to

introduce a water-rationing programme. Ash from the volcano covered and incapacitated 80 per cent of domestic water meters in the Territory. As a result of the eruption, spring catchment areas producing water required considerable cleaning to minimize contamination, which, in turn, required the use of additional labour. An additional standby generator system was also needed at the pump station.

20. In the aftermath of the July eruption, CARICOM extended an offer to assist the Government and the people of Montserrat. Following the declaration of the Territory as a disaster area, CARICOM received from the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency a situation report advising of the extent of the damage assistance required.[9]

21. In October 2003 the Governor of Montserrat announced $5.9 million in British aid.

IV. Economic conditions

A. General

22. Volcanic activity and hurricane damage have combined to seriously undermine Montserrat's economic development and have implications for its future planning. As efforts to rebuild the economy continue, economic activity centres on reconstruction, which is largely funded through DFID.

23. During the reporting period, the Government of the Territory continued efforts to solicit support and assistance to Montserrat from various sources. In August 2003, the Chief Minister visited Britain, where he had meetings with British officials, including representatives of DFID. He also had talks with a European investment group which had an interest in setting up a water bottling plant in the Territory. In addition, he met with members of Montserrat communities living in Britain.[10]

24. As was reported in last year's working paper (A/AC.109/2003/2, paras. 17-26), the analytical study conducted by the University of the West Indies, entitled "The challenges of achieving development in a micro state: The case of Montserrat 1995-2001",[11] concluded that Montserrat's economy continued to experience a debilitating shock to its development since 1995. The study identified as major challenges: limited financial resources; external decision-making; population size; limited development prospects; lack of natural resources; and lack of key infrastructure.

25. In August 2003, following the eruption of the volcano, *The Economist* published an article which questioned whether Montserrat was an economically viable Territory. Since the southern two thirds of Montserrat remain a "no-go" zone, most Montserratians were evacuated and now live in nearby islands or in the United Kingdom. According to the article, the 4,300 people cling on in a "safe zone" of about six miles by five miles. The United Kingdom has spent more than £180 million ($290 million) keeping them there. There is a subsidized helicopter service and ferry to Antigua.

26. Everything has been built anew: schools, hospital, power supply, and now a port, airport, and 20-cell prison. In July, the volcano spewed a cloud of ash nine miles high, and dumped rocks as big as golf balls on to roofs and gardens. Dealing with this has cost another $2.4 million.

B. Budget

27. According to the information provided by the administering Power, the total revenue for 2003 is $69,801,570. This includes local revenue of $28,242,200 and special grants of $41,559,370. The expenditure for 2003 totalled $69,801,570.

C. Banking and finance

28. As was reported in last year's working paper (A/AC.109/2003/2, paras. 31-32), Montserrat has a small offshore financial centre. In March 2002, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) announced that it had removed Montserrat from its list of tax havens as the Territory had made a commitment to transparency and effective exchange of information on tax matters with OECD countries by the end of 2005.[12]

D. Tourism

29. During the reporting period, the tourist industry of Montserrat continued to be affected by the unfavourable conditions created by the eruption of the Montsoufriere volcano and subsequent destruction of infrastructure and accommodations. The Government continued efforts to keep the industry alive and developed plans for its reconstruction and expansion.

30. Despite the major eruption of the volcano in July 2003, the Government of Montserrat announced that there were no restrictions on visitors, but cautioned individuals with asthma and respiratory problem. The Montserrat Tourist Board and Montserrat Aviation Service were instructed to inform visitors along the same lines. A similar travel advisory was issued by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office.[13]

31. In October 2003, it was announced that the British Government allocated EC$ 9 million for the local tourist industry in recognition of the fact that tourism was critical for the future of Montserrat and that the prospects for reviving tourism were good.[14]

32. According to the Tourism Director, it is understandable that for the time being tourists were unlikely to stay on the island for their full holiday, but the Territory had potential as a stopover destination. The Government intends to promote Montserrat to the excursion market and for short stopovers of two or three nights. It hopes that the opening of a new airport that is scheduled for October 2004 will attract flights and open up links with more islands including Saint Kitts, Nevis and Antigua.[15]

E. Construction and infrastructure

33. As was reported in last year's working paper (A/AC.109/2003/2, paras. 42-43), following the eruption of the volcano and the destruction of the capital and most habitable areas, the Government continued efforts to rebuild housing and infrastructure. During the reporting period, the Government in cooperation with DFID continued efforts to accommodate those residents who had been displaced by the volcano eruption. In August 2003, the second phase of a housing project started. The project, called Lookout Phase II Infrastructure Development, aims at constructing quality facilities for more than 120 residential and commercial lots. The implementation of the Lookout Phase II project will facilitate the provision of permanent housing to some 25 per cent of persons in need. The first stage includes releasing 80 lots and construction of a road, sewage system and waste stabilizing ponds. The Government plans to complete this phase within 15 months.[16]

34. With respect to the airport construction, in July 2003, the Chief Minister signed a contract with an Irish company to construct the runway at Gerald's, in the north of the island. The airport project is financed by the European Union and DFID at a cost of EC$ 42.6 million (US$ 16 million). The cost includes the construction of a 600-metre runway and an access road to Gerald's. Construction of the new terminal building by the local firm Ryan Investments Ltd. is nearing completion. The project is due to be completed in September 2004.

35. Montserrat has been without an airport since the closure of W. H. Bramble Airport in June 1997 following a volcanic eruption, which destroyed the terminal and other airport buildings. Currently, the only means of transport in and out of the island is by ferry or helicopter.[17]

36. In October 2003, the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank reported that construction activities contracted in Montserrat in 2003 compared to the previous year.[18]

F. Agriculture and fisheries

37. As was reported in last year's working paper (A/AC.109/2003/2, para. 35) the Territory's agriculture suffered not only from the 1995 and subsequent volcano eruptions, but also from a prolonged dry spell in 2001.

38. While no injury or loss of life has been reported during the latest eruption of the Soufriere Hills volcano in July 2003, that eruption, which has been described as the largest to have occurred in the Territory since the volcano came back to life in 1995, brought a severe blow to crop farmers, who have been hardest hit, according to Agriculture Ministry officials. The damage to agriculture is expected to run into millions rather than hundreds of thousands of dollars. In the aftermath of the eruption, the Minister of Agriculture held a series of meetings with major stakeholders. According to the Minister, the estimated value of lost crops, horticulture, environment, fisheries and livestock was over $374,531. This figure does not include damage to feeder roads, shade structures and other agricultural inputs. It is estimated that 95 per cent of all food crops, including fruit trees and seedlings were either damaged or destroyed. With respect to animal feed, livestock farmers had to cut soft trees to feed the animals. In order to assist the farmers, the

East Caribbean Group of Companies from Saint Vincent donated 500 bags of animal feed to livestock farmers, while 4,000 bags of feed have been ordered.[19]

39. The farmers who had no insurance requested assistance from the Government, and in August 2003, the Government announced financial aid to farmers whose produce was wiped out by heavy ash fall. The Executive Council decided to provide undisclosed one-off payment to the farmers. At the same time, the Government launched two projects to assist the farmers to get their produce to the markets.[20]

40. After the eruption of the volcano in July 2003, in order to alleviate the situation caused by loss of crops, the Government of Montserrat ordered a relaxation of the import restrictions on many essential commodities, such as eggs, meat and fresh vegetables.[21]

V. Social conditions

A. Education

41. As was reported in last year's working paper, the Government of Montserrat continued to rebuild its educational system in the safe northern part of the island (A/AC.109/2003/2, paras. 36-38). During the reporting period, it continued efforts to promote adult education in the Territory. In July 2003, the Government signed an agreement with the Atlanta Central University and Seoul Central College of Medicine (Georgia, United States of America) to establish a medical school in the Territory. The first semester started on August 2003 with 20 students. Under the agreement the University will provide scholarships to Montserrat students, as well as medical care to citizens. The terms of agreement also stipulate that the University will present to the Government plans for accommodation of students and staff.[22]

B. Health

42. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a health project developed by the Government of the United Kingdom, with technical assistance provided by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), aims to rebuild the health services in Montserrat to the pre-volcanic level. Community health clinics, providing free services for Montserratians, are in operation in the safe zone at three locations: St. Peter's, Cudjoe Head and St. John's. In addition, there are two private medical practitioners and one private dental practitioner on the island. St. John's Hospital was refurbished in 1999 and now has 30 beds, places for 50 elderly persons, a new pharmacy, a laboratory and medical records facilities, and new casualty, X-ray and outpatient departments, and a secure facility for psychiatric patients. Some services that are not available in the Territory on a full-time basis are procured through ongoing arrangement with visiting specialists.

43. After the volcano eruption on 12 July 2003, which was accompanied by huge amounts of dust and ash, the Chief Medical Officer of the Territory addressed the population recommending the wearing of dust masks, especially during the clean-up. A request for 50,000 masks was forwarded to the International Donor Group, which also included respirators, fire hoses, industrial vacuums, high-pressure pumps, water

tanks, mobile tanks and animal feed. The assistance was channelled through the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency and PAHO.[23]

44. In the aftermath of the recent eruption, the fine-grained character of the volcanic ash generated by the prolonged eruption of the volcano raised the issue of its possible health hazards, which was discussed by the scientific community.[24]

VI. United Kingdom development assistance

45. As was reported in the 2003 working paper (A/AC.109/2003/2, para. 53), the United Kingdom Government provides assistance to Montserrat to establish basic infrastructure in the safe northern part of the island. DFID has earmarked £72 million between 2002 and 2005/06 for projects within the country policy plan.

46. According to the information provided by the administering Power, during the Overseas Territories Council meeting in London in December 2003, the Chief Minister said that his Territory did not have the means to upgrade its maritime security and asked what assistance would be available. The FCO Official responded that the aviation security adviser based in Miami, would be able to advise on both aviation and maritime security to the Territory. The Chief Minister also reported that the Territory was unable to police its territorial water and was thereby unable to prevent illegal fishing in their waters. He complained that the new patrol boat provided by the United Kingdom was totally inadequate and had no protection against even a single bullet.

VII. Relations with international organizations and entities

47. The Territory continues to be a member of CARICOM and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), as well as the institutions associated with both groups, including the University of the West Indies, CDB and the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank. Montserrat is an associate member of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and its subsidiary bodies. The Territory is represented at the meetings of the Caribbean Group for Cooperation in Economic Development, sponsored by the World Bank. As was reported in the 2003 working paper (A/AC.109/2003/2, para. 58), Montserrat intended to sign the treaty with the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, which will bring a closer integration between the 15 States members of CARICOM.

48. During the reporting period, Montserrat was actively involved in the process of integration of the Caribbean subregion and the creation of the Caribbean common market. In April 2003, the Chief Minister participated in the Eastern Caribbean Summit, which focused on the modalities of economic integration and the preparation of a common passport.[25]

49. During his October 2003 visit to London, the Chief Minister of the Territory asked the United Kingdom for permission to join the other members of CARICOM in establishing a regional Appellate Court and a Single Market and Economy (see para. 15 above).[26]

50. By the end of the meeting, the British Government formally backed the Territory's plans to participate in the Caribbean Court of Justice and the CARICOM

Single Market and Economy. It was agreed by Montserrat and the representatives of the CARICOM secretariat that the Territory would need to avail itself of special treatment to minimize any short-term adverse impact from participating in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy.[27]

51. According to the information provided by the administering Power, during the discussion of membership by the Territories in Regional Organizations, at the Fifth Overseas Territories Consultative Council in December 2003, the Chief Minister of Montserrat said that such a membership was linked to self-determination. He set out the background to the establishment of CARICOM and OECS, of which Montserrat had been a founding member. Montserrat had received letters of entrustment to sign seven of the nine protocols for CARICOM's Single Market and Economy and was awaiting a letter of entrustment from the United Kingdom. According to the Chief Minister, Montserrat would benefit from membership through access to services and goods at lower costs, as well as access to the Caribbean institutions such as the Caribbean Development Bank and the University of the West Indies. The Chief Minister maintained that the Caribbean Territories lacked resources, critical mass, technical capacity and economic diversity. If the United Kingdom as administering Power could not accept this, it would have to put in place a mechanism to respond to the Territory's economic collapse.

52. During the same meeting, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State accepted that participation in Caribbean regional organizations could be beneficial for the relevant Territories, but some proposals for closer regional integration could involve significant cost (and legal considerations), which would have to be weighed carefully. Montserrat's request to join the CARICOM Single Market and Economy had legal and short- to medium-term cost implications for Montserrat's aid programme which, given Montserrat's budgetary aid position, DFID Ministers quite rightly wished to consider. Consultants had suggested that the costs to Montserrat for participation could be up to £1 million a year over the next five years. The Under Secretary stated that the United Kingdom had no difficulty with the existing practice that Territory Ministers represented their Territory in Caribbean regional organizations but, given the Governor's constitutional responsibility for external affairs, the Governor should be kept fully informed and in advance of any item for which the British Government was directly responsible. The British Government should be consulted at the earliest possible stage if the Territories were beginning to negotiate or considering the signing of any international agreement. The United Kingdom was ultimately responsible for the international obligations of the Overseas Territories. Entrustment had to be sought in every instance.

VIII. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

53. During the discussion on the distribution of powers and responsibilities between the Governors and the elected officials of the Territories, at the Fifth Overseas Territories Consultative Council in December 2003, the Chief Minister of Montserrat agreed with the representatives of other Territories that without a reduction in the Governor's powers, it would not be possible to develop. Montserrat was grateful for the assistance received from the United Kingdom, but an

arrangement where responsibility for the civil service and police rested with the Governor rather than with independent public and judicial service commissions gave the Territories no opportunity to prepare for eventual independence. The Chief Minister had to have a say in the appointment of the Commissioner of Police. Montserrat had no real problems with the relationship with the United Kingdom, but the Chief Minister sympathized with the colleagues who felt that too many matters were imposed upon them from London.

B. Position of the administering Power

54. In his statement at the 2nd meeting of the Fourth Committee on 6 October 2003 at the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly (see A/C.4/58/SR.2), the representative of the United Kingdom said that his Government welcomed the opportunity, as an administering Power to bring the Committee's attention to a number of significant developments that had taken place during the year. Following the adoption in 2002 of the British Overseas Territories Act, which granted all citizens of those Territories full British citizenship, the right of abode in the United Kingdom and freedom of movement within the European Union, over 14,000 passports had been issued by August 2003. As for environmental management in the Overseas Territories, his Government was working closely with the Territories in order to fulfil the commitments it had entered into under multilateral agreements and to support the efforts of the Territories themselves to protect and improve their environment.

55. With respect to the constitutional reviews, discussions were under way in the Cayman Islands, the Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands. The authorities of Anguilla had set up a Committee to canvass views from the population at large and a locally appointed Review Commission was expected to be established shortly in the British Virgin Islands. Talks with St. Helena had also started and were the furthest advanced, whereas discussions with Gibraltar had yet to commence. In terms of the Committee's specific interests, two years into the United Nations Second International Decade of Decolonization, perhaps the most significant development had been the decolonization seminar which had been held in Anguilla, from 20 to 22 May 2003, since it was the first time that the seminar had been held in a British Non-Self-Governing Territory. The choice of venue and the focus of the seminar had meant that several chief ministers and their equivalents, as well as opposition leaders and civil society representatives, had been able to attend. The representative of the United Kingdom said that the seminar had shown the extent to which many of the British Overseas Territories had dynamic and advanced economies, which already benefited from a high degree of self-government.

56. As seen from London he said, the United Kingdom had the impression that there was no strong desire in its Territories to choose the path of independence, even though his Government had made it clear that it would give every encouragement if they chose to do so, where independence was an option. The key, therefore, as long as the Territories chose to retain their link with the United Kingdom, would be to try to reconcile their desire for ever-greater autonomy and self-government with the United Kingdom's responsibility to ensure good governance, protect the impartiality of the public service and the independence of the judiciary, and to ensure compliance with relevant international obligations.

57. In his closing remarks during the Overseas Territories Consultative Council held in London from 8 to 10 December 2003, referring to the role of the Governors and constitutional reform, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State said that it was based on the principle of partnership. According to the Under Secretary, the concept of free association advanced by the United Nations Special Committee of 24 would not be inconsistent with that, if it meant mutual acceptance by both sides, because the United Kingdom Government had responsibilities to protect. But if it meant, as he sensed some Territory governments were arguing, that some Territories would draw their own constitutions free of outside interference, the United Kingdom would not agree with that. The Under Secretary went on to add that his Government valued its relationship with the Territories. It would not wish to force them into independence, although it would respond positively, where that would be an option (i.e., not Gibraltar) if that was the clear and constitutionally expressed wish of the people. The United Kingdom respected the fact that for some Territories that might be the long-term objective. He stressed, however, that while the Territories retained a link with the United Kingdom, their governance should be in partnership with it.[28]

IX. Consideration by the General Assembly

58. On 9 December 2003, the General Assembly adopted resolutions 58/108 A and B, without a vote; section III of resolution 58/108 B is specifically devoted to Montserrat.

Notes

[1] The information contained in the present paper has been derived from published reports and information available on the Internet. The facts and figures presented in the working paper are the latest information available.

[2] "Partnership for Progress and Prosperity: Britain and the Overseas Territories", United Kingdom White Paper, March 1999 (A/AC.109/1999/1 and Corr.1, annex).

[3] BBC Monitoring Americas, 2 July 2003.

[4] *St. Helena Herald*, 25 April 2003.

[5] *The Island Sun*, 29 March 2003.

[6] *The Royal Gazette*, 16 October 2003.

[7] *Caribbean Insight*, 1 August 2003, vol. 26, No. 27.

[8] BBC Monitoring Americas, 13, 14 July 2003.

[9] Ibid., 18 July 2003.

[10] Ibid., 12 August 2003.

[11] Information provided by the administering Power.

[12] Agence France-Presse, 7 March 2002.

[13] *The Montserrat Reporter*, 3 July 2003.

[14] *Caribbean Insight*, 17 October 2003, vol. 26, No. 36.

[15] *The Travel Trade Gazette* (U. K. and Ireland) Tonbridge: 15 December 2003, p. 42.

[16] BBC Monitoring Americas, 27 August 2003.

[17] BBC Monitoring Americas, London, 12 August 2003.

[18] BBC Monitoring Americas, 24 October 2003.

[19] BBC Monitoring Americas — Political, London, 26 July 2003.

[20] *The Island Sun*, 30 August 2003.

[21] *The Montserrat Reporter*, 3 July 2003.

[22] Ibid., 18 July 2003.

[23] Ibid., 3 July 2003.

[24] Environmental Research H. W. Wilson-ASI, October 2003, vol. 93, p. 202.

[25] BBC Monitoring Americas, 28 April 2003.

[26] *The Royal Gazette*, 16 October 2003.

[27] *Caribbean Insight*, 17 October 2003, vol. 26, No. 36.

[28] The Fifth Overseas Territories Consultative Council, Report of the Proceedings, 8-10 December 2003, Annex F, Closing Remarks by Mr. Rammell.